1. WHAT WE DO AND DO NOT KNOW

I wish I could say that I would not have done this.
- Foreign visitor

We did it because it was the Law. The authorities told us we had to do it.
- Perpetrator

It was because people believed they [the Tutsi] were the enemy. It was war.
- Bystander

They killed us because they were greedy. Those people just had big stomachs.
- Survivor

The words of the foreign visitor reproduced above appear in the guest-book of a former church belonging to the rural community of Nyamata, located in the small central African state of Rwanda. In April 1994, some five thousand people sought refuge here for the same reason. They were members of Rwanda's Tutsi ethnic minority. Over three days, April 14th, 15th and 16th 1994, the men, women, and children crammed inside of the building's brick walls were killed without distinction. Their killers comprised many of their neighbours as well as a smaller number of militia-men and soldiers alongside whom they worked. Overwhelmingly, the assailants were drawn from Rwanda's Hutu ethnic majority. Their objective was clear: to kill them all.

The visitor, however, did not give in to the impulse to revile and distance himself from the killers. He asks a deeper, perplexing question. Would he have acted differently if faced with the same circumstances with which many Rwandans were in 1994? It is with these circumstances that this book is concerned. How and why did they arise and culminate in such extraordinary violence in Rwanda, and how and why did they motivate many – but not all – ordinary Rwandans to participate in this violence? The contrasting statements of the three Rwandans whose words follow those of the foreigner above offer some insight into the difficulty of answering these two questions. Rwandans themselves disagree – often depending on their role in the violence. Although I heard many reasons and motivations, I present these three perspectives because I encountered them often whilst in Rwanda. They also reflect the three ideas central to the explanation of the violence that emerged from my research. Authority, security, and opportunity are each, I will show, a part of the answer to these two questions.

At only forty-five minutes by car from the capital Kigali, Nyamata is one of the more commonly-visited massacre sites in Rwanda. Yet the events that took place there were replicated in many locales across the country in 1994. In churches, schools, government buildings, hilltops, and even hospitals, Tutsi gathered and were killed. For others who hid or fled alone, they often

met their end in much lonelier places: in swamps, amid planted fields, in their own homes, or at the side of a road. Their stories may never be known. Together, however, these many hundreds of thousands of individual dramas would come to shock the world, etching themselves indelibly into global public consciousness as it became clear they were part of an organized attempt to eliminate an entire ethnic group. By my estimate, the killing - recognized belatedly as genocide - would claim the lives of between 491,000 and 522,000 Tutsi – as well as thousands of Hutu.[1] Rwanda became the high water-mark for violence in Africa, and also for international indifference toward it.

The failure to prevent and stop the killing would change the world in several important ways. The genocide would help inspire the articulation of an international 'Responsibility to Protect' and lend impetus to the movement to establish an International Criminal Court.[2] It drew attention to the scourge of sexual violence in war when it was recognized rape could qualify as an act of genocide.[3] And it continues to serve as an ominous reminder of inaction, having been invoked in an effort to mobilize international attention in the Sudan, Ivory Coast, Central African Republic, Kenya, and other African contexts where violence had been framed in ethnic or religious terms. Rwanda's genocide was a world-historical event whose lessons continue to resonate and whose origins deserve to be explained.

A Synopsis of the Genocide

Mindful of the distortionary role emotions and politics often play in accounts of violent conflict, I begin by presenting a summary of the background and events leading up to the genocide using facts around which contestation is minimal. In 1994 and still today, Rwanda comprised a large Hutu majority, a Tutsi minority, and an even smaller minority of Twa.[4] A Tutsi monarchy had governed the area as a kingdom for at least two centuries before European colonization. Both Germany from 1897, and then Belgium from 1916 permitted the native king, the *Mwami*, to remain

[1] See chapter seven for how I calculate the estimate of Tutsi killed. The number of Hutu killed *after* the genocide, mainly in the DRC, is likely to be much higher – in the tens of thousands - but the evidence on which to base an estimate is limited.

[2] The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty referred to Rwanda's genocide twenty-four times in its 2001 report first articulating the 'responsibility to protect'. It also reproduced Kofi Annan's words as UN Secretary-General: 'If humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica - to gross and systematic violations of human rights that offend every precept of our common humanity?'.

[3] In Prosecutor vs. Jean-Paul Akayesu (1998), the Tribunal found that rape and sexual violence '…constitute genocide in the same way as any other act as long as they were committed with the specific intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a particular group, targeted as such.' See ICTR-96-4-T, paragraph 731.

[4] The exact demographic balance before the genocide is contested but most estimates for Hutu range between 85 percent and 91 percent, Tutsi 8 percent and 14 percent, and Twa almost always 1 percent or less.

in place but ruled indirectly through him. The Belgians saw the Tutsi as racially superior, privileged them, and reified the differences between them and Hutu. They also propagated the idea the Tutsi originated outside of Rwanda. Then, shortly before Rwanda's independence in 1962, a 'Hutu revolution' overthrew the monarchy. The revolutionaries, led by Grégoire Kayibanda, proclaimed Rwanda's first Republic, dominated by a new Hutu elite from the south of the country. This historic event also triggered the exodus of tens of thousands of Tutsi civilians. Despite several armed attempts over the next few years, the exiles failed to return, and the attacks provoked retaliatory violence against the Tutsi population that had remained within Rwanda. This minority would live under an authoritarian and highly exclusionary regime. Then in 1973, in a coup d'état, a small group of northern Hutu wrested power from Kayibanda. A young Juvénal Habyarimana became President of Rwanda's Second Republic. He ruled autocratically until October 1990 when the RPF, composed primarily of the descendants of the Tutsi exiles from the revolution, invaded from across the Ugandan border to the north. This began Rwanda's civil war. At the same time, Habyarimana faced both internal and international pressure to democratize. In August 1993, he finally accepted an internationally-brokered power-sharing deal with the RPF and the main, newly-established domestic opposition parties. A UN peacekeeping mission, UNAMIR, was fielded to monitor the agreement. However, there was intense opposition to the peace agreement from hardliners at home, and Rwandan politics grew increasingly tense.

Eight days before the events in Nyamata's church climaxed, on April 6th 1994 a plane coming in to land at Rwanda's main airport was shot down killing all aboard. The most important victim was Rwanda's Hutu President, Juvénal Habyarimana. Almost immediately, a small group of extremists manoeuvred to seize control of the state, to physically eliminate or co-opt more moderate senior political figures who had previously supported power-sharing with the RPF, and to install a new government composed of Hutu hardliners. Once they had captured the state, they then used its considerable resources and authority to implement a genocidal program. They deployed its civilian and military apparatus, and mobilized ordinary Rwandans against the Tutsi civilian population. At the same time, government forces and the rebel RPF army also re-engaged in combat. The international community, instead of intervening to stop the slaughter, moved to evacuate foreign nationals and to draw down the 2700-strong UN peacekeeping force on the ground. In the end only 450 blue helmets remained. Some one hundred days later, the rebels emerged victorious. They had defeated the Rwandan army and militia, who escaped mainly across the north-west border into neighbouring Zaire. About two million Hutu civilians followed them into Zaire through a humanitarian corridor established by French forces in the south-west of the country. The international community finally responded with a new UN mission, UNAMIR II, as

well as massive humanitarian assistance for the refugees. However, it was too little too late for those trapped inside Nyamata's church, as well as for the hundreds of thousands of other civilians who perished in many other places.

What is Distinctive and Puzzling about Rwanda

Rwanda's genocide both shocks and intrigues at once. While mass violence is a rare phenomenon, the characteristics of the killing in Rwanda still stand out and capture the imagination for reasons worth articulating. First, the intensity of the violence and the targeting of women and children leave little doubt as to whether the intent was genocidal. The aim was to eliminate an ethnic group in entirety. If my estimate is correct, then nearly two-thirds of Rwanda's Tutsi population were exterminated. Second, there is the sheer speed of the violence. These people were killed in little over one hundred days, and, as we shall see in chapter three, there is evidence to suggest the majority of the victims perished in the first two to three weeks. Third, there is the remarkable geographic scope of the violence. It was nationwide. There are very few places in Rwanda where violence did *not* occur. Tutsi were targeted wherever they resided or wherever they fled. Fourth, one of the most controversial and distinctive aspects of the violence is the scale of civilian participation. In practically every community where the Tutsi 'enemy' lived, there were Hutu, and also Twa, who mobilized against them. By my estimate, one in five Hutu men committed an act of violence during the genocide. Their targets were often people known to them personally. Lastly, although less distinctive, the nature of the violence is still distressing to learn. It was collective, crude, intimate, and cruel. Killers often wielded agricultural implements - machetes, forks, and hoes – as well as traditional weapons - nail-studded clubs, knives, bows and arrows, and spears. They confronted their victims face-to-face and overwhelmingly in groups. Sexual violence against women was commonplace and the infliction of gratuitous pain and suffering on victims features prominently in witness accounts (Human Rights Watch, 1996).

It is these extraordinary characteristics of Rwanda's genocide – the scale, speed, and scope of both the violence and the civilian mobilization – that impress themselves upon the mind and that have helped inscribe it as an event of enduring significance in world history. They also represent an empirical puzzle – distinct from the overall question of why genocide occurred - for which we still do not have a good explanation. How and why did so many Rwandans mobilize, so quickly, kill so many, and in so many places? The urge to explain these disturbing and distinctive aspects of the violence is one of several still-puzzling questions about the genocide to which this book responds.

What We Know Already

Rwanda has become a paradigmatic case of genocide and as such it has stimulated an abundant literature. We know much already. Three subject areas have emerged and attracted much attention. First, there is the question of responsibility and accountability for the genocide. The forensic investigations into what western governments knew, the meticulous reports of human rights organizations, the many moving first-hand accounts by Rwandans and foreigners on the ground at the time, the various stories told by journalists, and the extensive records of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda may all be found here.[5] The identities of the politicians, military figures, state employees, clergy members, businessmen, professionals, journalists, academics, as well as even some ordinary Rwandans, who each participated in the genocide, have all become public knowledge in this way. Second, there is the aftermath of the genocide and Rwanda's trajectory following it. This area has generated the most writing, some of which has been deeply-polarized in assessments of the post-genocide regime's record. The main themes here are justice and reconciliation, development and democracy, and human rights and civil liberties, as well as the regional repercussions of the genocide.[6] Third, there is research on the history and causes of the genocide itself and the motivations of the individuals who participated in it. This book belongs to this last category. Although much has been written here also, there remain important gaps in our understanding and highly-contentious debates on several aspects of the genocide that persist.

There have already been several excellent reviews of the considerable literature on the genocide's origins, and I recommend them to readers interested in tracing the remarkable evolution in our knowledge and understanding.[7] The consensus on what did - and what did not - contribute to the genocide continues to evolve. Early ideas – media reports of an uncontrollable

[5] On the international community's responsibility, see for example Barnett (2002); Cohen (2007); Melvern (2006); Power (2002); Verschave (1994). On the responsibility of Rwandan actors, see for example Des Forges (1999); André Guichaoua (2005); A. Guichaoua (2015); T. P. Longman (2010); Rever (2018); Ruzibiza and Vidal (2005); Thompson (2007). The reports of human rights organizations include those by African Rights (1994); Des Forges (1999). First-hand accounts include, by non-Rwandans, Booh-Booh (2005); Dallaire and Beardsley (2004); Khan (2000); Marchal (2001), and by Rwandans, J. K. Gasana (2002); Hatzfeld (2005a, 2005b); Kabagema (2001); Mukagasana and May (1997); Nduwayo (2002); Rusatira (2005); Sibomana, Guilbert, and Deguine (1999). Journalistic accounts include Gourevitch (2004); Keane (1995). The public records database of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, now closed, can still be accessed online at http://jrad.unmict.org/.

[6] On wide-spectrum assessments of Rwanda's trajectory after the genocide, see Campioni and Noack (2012); O. McDoom (2011); Straus and Waldorf (2011) On justice and reconciliation in post-genocide Rwanda, see for example Buckley-Zistel (2006); Burnet (2012); Philip Clark (2005); P. Clark and Kaufman (2009); Bert Ingelaere (2017); Thomson (2013); Waldorf (2006). On democracy and development, see for example Ansoms (2009); Beswick (2011); Booth and Golooba-Mutebi (2012); Gready (2010); Hayman (2009); B. Ingelaere (2010); Pottier (2002); Reyntjens (2004, 2013). On the genocide's regional implications, see for example Gerard Prunier (2005); Reyntjens (2009); Turner (2007).

[7] Four of the most insightful reviews of the extensive literature on Rwanda's genocide are J. P. Kimonyo (2000); Uvin (2001); Timothy Longman (2004); Lemarchand (2007).

explosion of immutable tribal passions and the suggestion of state failure – no longer have much scholarly support.[8] Similarly, the claims that Rwandans committed violence out of a cultural predisposition for unthinking obedience - or out of a base desire to acquire the land of their victims in the face of a Malthusian resource crisis – are rarely repeated. However, I believe these perspectives need to be softened and refined. I find there was *some* 'pressure from below' and *some* Rwandans did participate in the genocide out of respect for the state's symbolic authority legitimizing the violence.

Nonetheless, a scholarly consensus has crystallized on several issues in explanations of the genocide. First, the violence was not spontaneous, but highly-organized; not a reaction of the masses but the strategy of a small elite (Des Forges, 1999); and not driven by emotions or passions but by power and politics. As mentioned, however, I believe this top-down perspective overstates elite agency and rationality and underestimates pressures from below. There were individuals at the local level, outside of the state structure and within society, who also pushed for violence. Second, the identities – Hutu and Tutsi and in whose names the violence was framed - were constructed and instrumentalized. In particular, colonial-era racial science embraced by the Belgians magnified and rigidified group differences and the identities became associated with political power (Mamdani, 2001). This equation persisted to deadly effect into post-independence Rwanda. Third, the perpetrators were largely 'ordinary' and their motives heterogeneous (Straus, 2006). It would be difficult to argue the killers were all extraordinary or deviant in some way given the scale of civilian participation in Rwanda. However, I contend this implicit view of the perpetrators as an undifferentiated mass overlooks important intra-group differences that matter for understanding the mechanics of mass mobilization. Patterns in motivation were discernible. Fourth, the media, in particular radio broadcasts, framed and propagated messages to stoke fear, resentment, and hostility among the Hutu population toward the Tutsi as an ethnic group which in turn motivated and mobilized individuals to kill (Thompson, 2007). As we shall see, however, the radio's role was also *ex post* justificatory. Its content radicalized and provided an ideological rationale for the killing only *after* much of the violence had been committed. Lastly, few disagree the genocide was the culmination of a process in which three short-to-medium term factors - Rwanda's civil war, move to multiparty politics, and ongoing peace negotiations - were all consequential in the elite decision-making that pushed Rwanda closer to genocide. Their impact 'below' – how they affected and were interpreted by ordinary Rwandans - however, is less well-documented and the significance of these effects implicitly underestimated.

[8] For a deconstruction of the New York Times' framing of the genocide as 'tribal hatred' see Chari (2010). On state collapse, see Zartman (1995).

Why Consensus on the Genocide is Limited

Yet the number of issues on which there is a clear consensus is still surprisingly small given the remarkable amount of data and writing that research on the genocide has generated. Numerous theories still circulate and debates persist. Emotions and politics play a part in generating the diversity in explanations. Another reason, already noted, is the uneven quality of the evidence used to support the explanations offered (Straus, 2006, p. 3). Some scholars rely on primary evidence, both archival and oral, collected specifically to build or test theories. Others draw more heavily on secondary sources and their theoretical imagination in making their claims. A final reason for proliferation is methodological. The choices in respect of comparison and level of analysis matter. Comparisons help strengthen causal inferences by pinpointing similarities and differences between cases. While cross-case comparisons are often contentious given the persistent debate over how to define genocide, within-case comparisons – between time periods, places, and persons for instance - still offer an opportunity to narrow down explanations. What were Hutu-Tutsi relations like before and after the war started? Why did some regions experience violence early on, but others later? Why did some people kill and others not? There is value in leveraging the considerable and complex variation within the genocide. While we do have studies that make such intra-case comparisons, most commonly between places, rarely do the methodological rationales, when given, align and allow for broader theorization.

The level at which the genocide is analysed – macro, meso, or micro - also affects the explanatory factors identified. The vantage-point matters. Research on perpetrators at the micro-level has yielded fascinating insights into how and why individuals killed. Studies of events at the macro-level have deepened our understanding of how and why the genocide occurred. But how generalizable are findings at lower levels of analysis? And what are the links between individual-level behaviours and national-level processes?

The different levels of analysis scholars have chosen also represent a useful way to summarize and classify the multitude of theories generated since the genocide. Macro-level explanations are plentiful. The story of Rwanda's genocide has been well-told from the 'top'. These accounts focus on individuals, events, and processes at the national and international levels. Yet they have suggested a very diverse set of structural, conjunctural, and historical factors behind the genocide. Structural processes suggested include growing demographic pressure, increasing

ecological scarcity, an acute economic decline, and 'structural violence' and inequality.[9] Conjunctural events emphasized include the start of the civil war, the move to democratize, the failure of the peace process, the rise of hate media, the impact of a structural adjustment program, the assassination of the president, the role of the Church, and the indifference if not complicity of international actors.[10] Historical factors raised include Rwanda's history of identity-based politics, an exclusionary founding myth or narrative, a racist ideology, the legacy of a deeply-inscribed racial or ethnic cleavage, the memory of one group's inferiority and oppression by another group, as well as a materially strong state.[11] Scholars often weave some combination of these factors together into convincing narratives. Some compare Rwanda to other cases of genocide – and in two instances to cases where genocide could have but did not occur - to make more causally credible claims.[12]

Micro-level explanations, by which I mean how and why individuals came to commit violence, have also grown in number.[13] Numerous theories exist for how and why individuals participated: deprivation, opportunism, peer pressure and coercion, prejudice and racism, threat and fear, conformity and obedience, ideological commitment, displaced frustration, desensitization and habituation, and social ties and interaction are among the many explanations suggested.[14] Some scholars have built sophisticated models, often drawing on psycho-social theory, to explain how individuals become perpetrators.[15] However, we lack a strong empirical basis – a systematic comparison of perpetrators against non-perpetrators for instance - to confirm or falsify these various ideas.

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[9] On demographic pressure, see for example Bonneux (1994); Ford (1995). On ecological scarcity, see for example André and Platteau (1998); D. Newbury (1994); Peter Uvin (1996). On economic decline and structural adjustment, see Chossudovsky (1996); Philip Verwimp (2003). On structural violence, see Uvin (1998). On inequality, see J. Gasana (2002).

[10] On the importance of the civil war, see Straus (2006, pp. 224-226). On democratization and also the rise of exclusionary ideology, see Mann (2005, pp. 428-448); Snyder (2000, pp. 296-304). On the failure of the peace process, see Jones (2001); A.J. Kuperman (1996). On the complicity of international actors, notably France, see Verschave (1994). On racist ideology, see Uvin (1998). On myths and narratives see Stuart J. Kaufman (2011); Straus (2015).

[11] On the history of identity politics, see C. Newbury (1998). On the importance of Rwanda's racial and ethnic cleavage, see Mamdani (2001). On the importance of state power, see Straus (2006).

[12] Comparative analyses that include Rwanda can be found in Sémelin (2005); Chirot (2008); Kiernan (2009); Powell (2011); Mann (2005). Straus (2015) and Midlarsky (2005) also compare Rwanda against negative cases – where genocide did not happen.

[13] Uvin (2001, p. 98) first made this observation on the deficit of micro-level studies.

[14] On deprivation, frustration, prejudice, and racism, among other explanatory constructs, see Uvin (1998, pp. 107-139). On opportunism, see Uvin (2001, pp. 98-99). On peer pressure and coercion, see Straus (2006, p. 139). On the role of obedience, see Gérard Prunier (1998, p. 248). On ideological commitments, see Mann (2005, pp. 469-470). On social ties, see Fujii (2006, pp. 149-179). On desensitization, see Scull, Mbonyingabo, and Kotb (2016). On social interaction, see Smeulers and Hoex (2010).

[15] See for example Adler, Loyle, Globerman, and Larson (2008); Baum (2008); Luft (2015); Staub (2003); Tanner (2011); Waller (2002); Williams (2017); P. G. Zimbardo (2007).

Meso-level explanations are less common. Yet resistance or cooperation from local authorities and local communities mediated the effect of genocidal directives from the centre. The decisions and actions of subnational actors can profoundly shape local patterns of violence as they often have valuable local information and intelligence as well as local power and influence on which the centre depends for successful implementation of the killing. They represent the link between centre and periphery. In Rwanda, the choices of civilian authority figures – prefects and burgomasters – as well as communal police officers, local opposition parties, and church leaders have each mattered for mobilization and violence.[16] It is worth noting that while local cooperation with the centre typically accelerated the genocide, resistance never prevented it altogether. The resources available to local actors were never a match for the means at the disposal of those who centrally controlled the state.

Although there are points of overlap across these levels of explanation, what is missing are first explicit causal connections between the macro, meso, and micro and, second, attempts at comparisons.[17] What are the mechanisms through which the events and processes at the macro-level affected communities and individuals at the meso and micro-levels? How, for instance, did war alter relations between neighbouring Hutu and Tutsi and lead members of the former to kill members of the latter? How did multipartyism impact the lives of ordinary Rwandans and contribute to their mobilization during the genocide? How exactly did the Rwandan state's authority operate to mobilize citizens to help implement genocide? There is a need for explanation that draws on evidence across levels and synthesizes it into a causally-coherent whole. Furthermore, we have too few explanations that rely on comparisons between periods, places, and persons purposely-selected to test or build hypotheses. By examining the genocide at differing levels of analysis and through more systematic comparisons, we may better be able to distinguish between the myriad theories that circulate.

The Questions that Remain

The two central questions running throughout this book are: (i) what are the circumstances that gave rise to the genocide; and (ii) how did these affect individuals and motivate some, but not others, to kill? These two primary questions raise a number of smaller but important ones. Answers to these secondary questions may help us choose between the myriad explanations that still circulate. I list these questions here to highlight the gaps in our knowledge and understanding and

[16] Excellent meso-level analyses include Boersema (2009); Brehm (2017); André Guichaoua (2005); Tim Longman (1995); Straus (2006); Wagner (1998).
[17] Three good exceptions are the work of Fujii (2006); Longman (2010); and Straus (2006).

distinguish between those for which the answers we presently have are incomplete and those for which the answers remain contested.

First, we have, in my view, unsatisfying explanations of the four unusual and shocking characteristics of Rwanda's genocide. Why did *so many* people participate in the violence? Why did they *mobilize so quickly*? Why did the violence *spread so rapidly*? And why did it happen in *so many places* across Rwanda? The specific and distinctive form the mobilization and violence took merits a separate explanation from their onset more generally. As we shall see, I believe these extraordinary characteristics are related to a number of extraordinary features of Rwanda's socio-demography and geography which have not all yet been fully explicated. These unusual characteristics also invite questions relating to local variation across the country in their expression. Why did mobilization and violence occur in some places sooner than others, for instance? And why were more people killed in some locales than in others?

We also have only partial answers – the evidence base is limited - to a number of other important questions. Why did some people kill, but others not? How different were the attitudes and beliefs – that is how large was the distance or gap - between the perpetrators and the non-perpetrators? Who were the mobilizers at the local level and what were the practical mechanics of mass mobilization? How exactly did fundamental changes in the macro-political environment – the war, multipartyism, peace process, for instance – affect ordinary Rwandans below and contribute to their mobilization during the genocide? Was there resistance to the killing at either the top or bottom – contestation between pro-and anti-violence elements? If so, why did extremists often prevail over moderates?

Second, a number of questions remain the subject of ongoing debate. How many people participated in the genocide and how many people were killed? What role did emotions, ideology, and ethnicity play among ordinary Rwandans and elite decision-makers? How much was the genocide the product of elite manipulation from above and how much popular pressures from below? Was the population radicalized and ready to kill before the genocide began? Were there differences among the killers and what more can we say about their motives? Was the genocide intended long in advance? Could early international intervention have prevented it?

I do not pretend to have definitive answers that will resolve these questions or settle these debates once and for all. But I have drawn conclusions and made inferences, supported by evidence I collected, whose merits readers can evaluate for themselves. There remain also a number of highly-politicized questions for which I have little new evidence of my own. Who was responsible for shooting down the president's plane that triggered the genocide? And how many

Hutu civilians were killed during and after the genocide by the Rwandan Patriotic Army? I will address these questions but rely primarily on interpreting existing sources to do so.

Theories and Hypotheses

There is no shortage of explanations then about what caused Rwanda's genocide and why Rwandans killed. One of the goals of this book is to test existing theories as well as to develop new hypotheses in relation to both questions. In addition to the voluminous literature specific to Rwanda's genocide then, I also review here theories that have emerged from empirical and theoretical studies of: (i) collective violence; (ii) civil wars; (iii) ethnic conflicts; and (iv) other genocides. All of these literatures have potential implications for Rwanda. In setting these theories out, I have paid close attention to the underlying causal logic behind them in order to bring related macro and micro explanations together into similar analytical categories. For example, 'war', a country-level variable, could be translated at the individual level as 'fear'. The causal logic or mechanism linking the two factors is essentially 'threat' and for this reason I classify them together. Similarly, a cultural propensity to obey authority may well be related to a regime's type as authoritarian or to a state's strong material capacities. I group these together as well then.

One of the main reasons for why the range of theories is so broad is the lack of consensus on the concept of genocide. The 1948 United Nations Convention on Genocide defines genocide as 'acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group'. Almost every element in the juridical definition has been the subject of intense scholarly debate: the victim groups protected, the perpetrating agents recognized, the modes of extermination permitted, and the intention required. These debates have been well-covered already (Straus, 2001) and I do not attempt a new general definition of genocide here. Instead, I offer a description of what I believe are the defining characteristics of the violence in Rwanda. The aim is to help evaluate the validity of the comparisons that will inevitably be made with violence elsewhere.

I believe then Rwanda's genocide may be characterized as action organized by individuals who control the apparatus of the state, in collaboration with members of the general population, that deliberately but not exclusively targets a group whom these individuals perceive as innately distinct, using violence whose purpose is to eliminate the targeted group physically. The involvement of ordinary, private citizens in both the organization and implementation of the violence was a shocking and defining feature of Rwanda's violence. Popular participation in war-time violence, on the side of the state, is not unusual. However, such participation varies in its scale, organization, and relationship to the state. In Rwanda, this participation was massive,

organized, and closely-coordinated with the state. In contrast, pro-government militias, such as the Janjaweed in the Sudan's Darfur region, while also organized and aligned with the regime, typically involve a much smaller number of individuals. The massive scale of societal involvement in the physical act of killing sets Rwanda apart from many other cases.

i. Wars, Insecurity, Threats and Fear-Based Explanations

It is widely-recognized wars and genocides have a strong relationship (Sémelin, 2005; Shaw, 2015; Straus, 2015). But the questions of how and why exactly a macro-level variable such as war facilitates genocides have produced some quite different answers. First, it has been argued that wars provide a 'cover' for genocide (Winter, 2003). In the 'fog of war' it is often difficult to obtain reliable information on who is killing whom. Victims can sometimes be mistaken for aggressors, and civilians can be mistaken for combatants. In Rwanda, poor information flow meant that by the time the violence was recognized as genocide, tens of thousands of Tutsi and moderate Hutus had already been killed. Second, it is argued that wars help genocides because they can create political opportunities or political upheavals that challenge and weaken regimes.[18] Following Habyarimana's assassination, the civil war immediately re-ignited and an extremist minority seized the opportunity to eliminate or co-opt the moderate opposition. It then established itself as the new regime and unleashed its genocidal program. Third, it is argued that wars brutalize people. Through repeated involvement in and exposure to war-time violence, individuals become desensitized to its effects, and become capable of cruel violence themselves. This argument has been made to explain atrocities committed by ordinary American G.I.s in Vietnam (Faludi, 1999, pp. 291-358). It may also explain the actions of ordinary Rwandans in 1994.

Last, and perhaps the most common explanation, however, is that wars create threats. Threat is a central theme in explanations of genocides that seek to identify the motivation for violence.[19] Security dilemmas, a threat-based concept from international relations theory, can arise *within* countries as well as between them. A domestic security dilemma occurs when one group takes defensive action that is interpreted as offensive by the other side. In such situations 'the drive for security in one group is so great that it produces near-genocidal behaviour towards neighbouring groups' (Posen, 1993, p. 106). Related to this, at the individual-level, war-time threats create *fears*. Fear amplifies the need for security and the 'target for ethnic violence will be the group that is the biggest threat' (Petersen, 2002, p. 68). Threat-driven fear can be strategically framed in collective terms to mobilize communities (Shesterinina, 2016). In the case of Rwanda, it has been

[18] On political opportunities, see Krain (1997, p. 355). On political upheavals, see Barbara Harff (2003, p. 62)
[19] See for instance Chirot (2008); Sémelin (2005); Straus (2006).

argued that Hutu civilians either feared the rebel RPF would kill them, or that it would reverse the revolution and reinstate the Tutsi monarchy that had oppressed them historically. They killed in self-defence. But how widespread were these fears among ordinary Rwandans? Through what mechanisms did they divide communities? We lack answers to these questions.

ii. Demographic and Environmental Explanations

Civil wars, or violent conflict more generally, have a long history with both demography and ecology. At the macro-level, one of the more enduring demographic hypotheses has been the 'youth bulge'. Bulges arise when an unusually high proportion of a population is 'young', often defined as those in the 15-24 year-old age bracket. Cross-national research has suggested that this demographic particularity makes countries more vulnerable to domestic armed conflicts, rebellions, and even revolutions.[20] The closest micro-level equivalent is the perceived threat posed by *male youth*. Described as 'loose molecules in an unstable fluid' (Kaplan, 1994), young men it is argued are particularly vulnerable to mobilization and recruitment into rebel groups, militia and gangs. Some argue that it is because their opportunity cost is low: unemployed young men do not have livelihoods or income to lose (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004, p. 569). Others argue it is about responsibility: young men can afford to engage in risky activity such as violence because they do not have families or established careers to worry about (J. Goldstone, 2002). Yet others say it has to do with young people's attraction to change and ideas: they are susceptible to ideological appeals for action (Huntington, 2002). In the context of Rwanda, its newly-formed political parties did have 'youth wings' that competed and even fought each other before the genocide. Many of these young men allegedly formed the backbone of the attack groups during the genocide. The most infamous of these groups, the *Interahamwe*, were in fact more than a youth wing. They were a militia that had been trained to kill. The role of young men in Rwanda's genocide is a hypothesis that bears investigation.

Ecological explanations of group conflict have at their root a scarcity of natural resources on which the population depends. Arable land, water, and forests it is argued are most likely to create tensions within communities when they are in short supply (Homer-Dixon, 1999). The original Malthusian argument has largely fallen out of favour: war, disease, famine, or other disaster do not *inevitably* occur because the population grows faster than the food supply. They are often mediated, usually by human ingenuity to mitigate the underlying resource scarcity. Instead, a softer, neo-Malthusian claim argues that environmental scarcity simply creates conditions in which

[20] On youth bulges and armed conflicts, see Urdal (2006). On rebellions, see Moller (1968). On revolutions, see J. A. Goldstone (1991).

conflict is more likely to occur.[21] Diamond (2008, p. 23), most popularly associated with the modern Malthusian argument, writes 'Rwanda represents a Malthusian catastrophe happening under our eyes, an over-populated land that collapsed in bloodshed.' When scarcity coincides with other factors such as group inequality, weak conflict-mediating institutions, and demographic pressure, then conflict is even more probable. The causal pathways are varied and complex. In explaining Rwanda's genocide, its land and people are often cited. Rwanda's population growth was high, averaging 3.3 percent per annum between 1985 and 1991. On average, 422 Rwandans lived in every square kilometre of its farmable land. This made it the highest density in Africa in 1991. There has in addition been evidence to support the importance of a resource crunch at the micro-level and its role in the collapse of Rwandan society (André & Platteau, 1998; Ohlsson, 1999; Marijke Verpoorten, 2012b). The importance of land scarcity then remains an important hypothesis to investigate in the context of Rwanda.

iii. Deprivation-Related Explanations.

The notion of deprivation lies at the root of a wide variety of related concepts used to explain conflict, violence, and also genocide. These include vertical and horizontal inequality, structural violence, relative deprivation, and difficult life conditions among many others.[22] At the heart of some of these ideas is a grievance-centric mechanism. Relative deprivation for example occurs when there is a discrepancy between an individual's aspirations and his/her capabilities. The result, it is argued, is frustrated energy that can be displaced and expressed as aggression. Structural violence, a broader term encompassing deprivation, prejudice, and inequality, focuses on a different set of emotions: despair, anger, and cynicism it argues are the antecedents of actual violence. Despite the sophistication of many of these concepts, it is difficult to evaluate their explanatory value across cases. In part this is because they are not always consistently defined and in part it is because they are difficult to measure. Nonetheless deprivation-related arguments seem to resonate more with Rwanda than in other genocides. As with the demographic and environmental arguments, this is likely to be because of another of Rwanda's particularities: it was a poverty-stricken country in sub-Saharan Africa. Many of its perpetrators were themselves poor. While it is relatively easy to make macro-level generalizations from these facts, individual-level

[21] See Ishiyama and Pechenina (2012); Uvin (2001, p. 83).
[22] On vertical inequality, see for example Besancon (2005). On horizontal inequality, see Stewart (2002). On structural violence, see Uvin (1998). On relative deprivation, see Gurr (1970). On difficult life conditions, see Staub (1989, p. 44).

evidence to support deprivation-related claims is in shorter supply.[23] Deprivation-related explanations deserve further investigation at the micro-level.

iv. Identity/Ethnicity and Racism/Prejudice-Based Explanations

Identity – both personal and social – is a powerful motivational force in individuals and groups. It has been studied intensively by social psychologists who have built numerous competing theories of inter-group relations based on it. Social identity theory for example argues that *self-esteem* motivates individuals (Tajfel, 1982). Social dominance theory in contrast assumes a socio-biological *instinct for superiority*: societies are inherently hierarchical and dominant and subordinate groups will always arise (Waller, 2002). Realistic group conflict theory is premised on individual *rationality* (Sherif, 1988). Individuals will exhibit ingroup solidarity when there is competition for scarce resources.

Ethnicity - a particular type of social identity - has captured the imagination of scholars of wars and violence. It has special properties it is argued that makes it particularly easy to mobilize groups. 'Ethnic conflict' and 'ethnic violence' have now become distinct phenomena. They continue to command scholarly attention even though they have been shown to be quite rare when compared against the universe of all ethnic groups (J. Fearon & Laitin, 1996). Several other related concepts have identity or ethnicity at their root: 'primordial attachment', 'ancient tribal hatreds', and 'inter-ethnic enmity' implicitly emphasize the importance of ethnicity.[24] The scholarly consensus now is that ethnic identity is both constructed and relational. Identity is not the product of essentialist or immutable differences between groups. Instead its salience varies over time and space as a consequence of both structural and strategic forces. Genocide scholars have also recognized identity can be instrumentalized by ethnic entrepreneurs to mobilize groups. The consensus among Rwanda specialists is that the meaning of Hutu and Tutsi evolved over the course of its history, i.e. the identities are constructed and malleable (Des Forges, 1999, pp. 31-33; Mamdani, 2001, pp. 73-75; C. Newbury, 1988). However, under Belgian colonial rule these identities were institutionalized and reified as racially distinct. At the time of the genocide, it is argued, ordinary Hutu assimilated messages that emphasized the distinct racial origin of the Tutsi. They were alien, did not belong in Rwanda, and thus deserved to be removed. However, the extent to which ordinary Rwandans actually believed these statements is largely unknown. The

[23] An exception is Philip Verwimp (2005) who finds those with something to gain and those with something to lose were more likely to be drawn into the violence.
[24] On primordial attachment, see Geertz (1975). On inter-ethnic enmity, see Straus (2006).

effectiveness of these intentional efforts to increase the salience of these identities needs to be investigated at the individual-level.

At the micro-level, ethnic prejudice and racism are closely related to ingroup and outgroup identities. While *positive* sentiments towards one's ingroup can be expressed as pride, loyalty, and superiority, *negative* feelings towards the outgroup subsume contempt, hostility, and prejudice (Brewer, 1999). A considerable amount of research has focused on this last expression: the causes and measures of prejudice. However, much less is known about the impact of prejudice on actual individual *behaviour*. Would prejudice motivate an individual to commit violence? What exactly is the relationship between prejudice and ethnic conflict? [25] It certainly seems a question that would also be germane to genocide. Anti-Semitism, or rather a particularly pernicious form of it, has been suggested as an explanation of the Holocaust (Goldhagen, 1997, pp. 392-393). Dehumanization of the outgroup, an extreme form of prejudice, is seen as a stage along the path to genocide. Rwanda's history contains many examples of precolonial, colonial, and modern state policies that have discriminated against one or other ethnic groups. Racism it is argued is deeply embedded in Rwandan society and was activated during the genocide (Uvin, 1998, pp. 216-217). Both theory and evidence suggest that the role of prejudice needs to be investigated in Rwanda's genocide.

v. Ideologies, Myths, and Narratives

Ideologies, myths, and narratives feature prominently in explanations of wars and genocides.[26] Linking them is the role each plays in shaping individual and collective beliefs about the targeted group. A diverse set of ideas underlie the ideologies identified by scholars as conducive to the exclusion of a group: notions of purity and contamination; future utopias built on a racial identity; the idea that groups may be considered either civilized or barbarous; the belief a nation-state was founded for a particular core ethnic group.[27] Nationalism, particularly ethno-nationalist ideology, has a strong association with violence. It emerges in contexts of democratic transition and weak conflict-mediating institutions when 'ethnos' and 'demos' become readily conflated (Mann, 2005, p. 4) or when elites instrumentalize nationalism to rally popular support (Snyder, 2000). As with ideologies, the content of historical myths and narratives embedded in societies about 'other' groups also ranges widely. It includes beliefs that one group has been the victim of injustice by the 'other' group; that this group cannot be trusted and represents a potential threat;

[25] For a good review of the literature on the relationship between ethnic prejudice and conflict, see Green and Seher (2003)
[26] See for example Barbara Harff (2003, p. 62); Stuart J Kaufman (2015); Snyder (2000, pp. 37-39); Straus (2015).
[27] See Chirot (2008); Melson (1992); Sémelin (2005) on purity; Weitz (2005) on utopias; Powell (2011) on barbarism and civilization; and Levene (2005) on the nation-state.

and that the group does not belong and originates outside of the society. These myths and narratives cue the emotional reactions - resentment, fear, and hostility for instance – that emerge in intergroup relations (Stuart J. Kaufman, 2001).

Yet the causal role of ideology, myths, and narratives in mass violence is complex and contested. Ideology proponents point to the power of ideas to unify and mobilize a group, and to motivate members to take action (Leader Maynard, 2014). Ideology also justifies this action – including violence - taken against another group (Costalli & Ruggeri, 2015). Others argue ideologies, such as the founding narrative of the state (Straus, 2015), shape the decisions of ruling elite to include or exclude particular groups (Chirot, 2008). Perpetrators are 'killers by conviction'.[28] In contrast, others have argued that ideological commitments do not really motivate individuals. They merely provide a rationale, often *ex post*, for otherwise self-interested behaviour (Mildt, 1996, p. 311). For rationalist proponents of ethnic conflict, myths and narratives are merely cultural raw material that political entrepreneurs use to magnify fears and mobilize populations (Lake & Rothchild, 1998, p. 20). They are simply 'amplifiers'. For culturalist advocates, however, these myths are in fact one of the necessary conditions for violence (Stuart J. Kaufman, 2001, p. 30; M. H. Ross, 2007). Ethnic conflict is not possible without them.

Group myths were certainly presently in Rwanda. The narrative, common among Hutu, was that Tutsi had arrived in Rwanda as pastoralists after the Hutu. They were strangers in a new land that they colonized. They also pressed into servitude the Hutu settlers, and ruled over them until the revolution toppled the Tutsi monarchy. It has been argued that many of Rwanda's Hutu leaders and population feared that the RPF, comprised principally of Tutsi, would reinstate this pre-revolutionary order. Similarly, it has been argued Rwanda had a *racist* ideology emphasizing past Tutsi oppression and distinct racial origins deeply-embedded in its society (Uvin, 1998, pp. 34-39). It was reawakened through extremist media such as the newspaper *Kangura* and the radio station, *Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines,* and used to mobilize the civilian population. Appeals to Hutu nationalism were at the core of the 'Hutu Power' movement it is argued. The movement brought extremists from Rwanda's different political parties under one ideological umbrella. However, the extent to which such an ideology had been internalized by ordinary Rwandans is largely unknown. Those who claim Rwandans were ideologically radicalized at the time of the presidential plane crash have mainly assumed that what is disseminated from above will be believed below. But how much credibility did ordinary Rwandans give to the radio? Or to the politicians who preached ethnic division? These questions need to be more carefully examined in the Rwandan context.

[28] Mann (2005, p. 239) for example has argued this about Nazi perpetrators.

vi. Political and Material Opportunism

This set of explanations argues that actors take advantage of opportunities and violence is the outcome of action pursued in their self-interest. The benefits to themselves can be diverse. Political opportunists seek power by exploiting gaps in the political structure. At the macro-level, democratic transitions for instance can create instability and several explanations have focused on the potential for violence in such moments. Competitive politics create incentives for both ruling and 'challenger' elites to mobilize constituents, sometimes along ethno-nationalist lines.[29] Violence becomes politics by other means. Rwanda's move to multipartyism in 1991 is widely-recognized as a critical juncture in its trajectory toward genocide but how exactly did party politics push the country closer to ethnic confrontation? Was there a conflation of 'ethnos' and 'demos' (Mann, 2005) in which democracy was equated with Hutu majority rule? Political opportunities may also arise from other types of structural transitions. Wars, revolutions, and other political upheavals can create the necessary break in the opportunity structure for extremists to seize control of the state (Barbara Harff, 2003; Krain, 1997). Democratization is only one example of political opportunity creation.

At a more micro-level, opportunity-centred explanations claim individuals commit violence because it can be a form of upward social mobility. Perpetrators of the Holocaust took advantage of the opportunity to further their careers by showing their willingness to do their 'jobs'.[30] Others argue that the opportunity for self-enrichment is an important motivation. Rwandan *génocidaire*s frequently looted the property of their victims. Rape and sexual violence were also prominent features of the genocide and there is evidence that the land of victims was redistributed in some places. How important were the spoils of the genocide and in what ways did they work to motivate individuals in Rwanda?

vii. Group Behaviour and Collective Action

This collection of theories is based on the observation that individuals behave differently in groups to when they are alone. One field of research has been crowd psychology.[31] What turns peaceable crowds into violent mobs? De-individuation – the sense that you are not personally responsible for your actions – is central to these arguments (L. Festinger, Pepitone, & Newcomb,

[29] On the risks posed by democratization in Rwanda, see J.-P. Kimonyo (2016); Roessler (2005); Silva-Leander (2008); Snyder (2000).
[30] See for example Mildt (1996).
[31] See for example Canetti (2000); Le Bon (1896); Tambiah (1996).

1952). Other research has instead focused on riots (D. L. Horowitz, 2002), that is to say episodic, seemingly spontaneous outbursts of group violence, or else pogroms (Brass, 1996), which imply greater organization and often the acquiescence of the state. Do these follow predictable patterns? Yet other work argues against a general theory of collective violence and instead highlights multiple, different mechanisms at work (Tilly, 2003). A different and promising avenue of inquiry for Rwanda has been the exploration of the effects of conformity and peer pressure on individual behaviour. As Milgram's (1964) experiments famously suggested, these forces can even cause individuals to inflict harm on others. Others point to coercion or ingroup policing], that is the threat or use of physical penalties, to mobilize a group (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998, p. 433; Pfaffenberger, 1994). In Rwanda, the violence was collective. Rwandans assembled into attack groups to hunt for and kill their targets. What importance should be attached to this fact? Were individuals mostly coerced into the violence or did they participate willingly? Are the forces that initiated individuals to violence different from those that sustained them? These questions bear further investigation in Rwanda.

viii. The State, Elite, and Obedience-Related Explanations

At the country-level of analysis, the connection between the state and genocide is a very strong one. But what aspect of the state is important in explaining genocide? One debate centres on the type of *regime* in control of the state. Authoritarian regimes it is argued are more likely to commit genocide than democracies (R J Rummel, 1995). Institutionalist and normative logics have been proposed as explanations. If power is highly concentrated in a single or few institutions - as in dictatorships – checks and balances are weak and it becomes difficult to organize opposition to state-enforced policies such as genocide. The normative logic points to the respect of human rights and values such as tolerance and pluralism that prevail in democracies as a source of restraint. Another set of arguments focus on the state's *material capacity* instead. Strong states, particularly those with modern bureaucratic, military, and financial systems, have the means to organize and implement mass violence and have nurtured the argument that genocide is a by-product of modernity (Bauman, 2000). Rwanda has been described as an atypical state in sub-Saharan Africa (Straus, 2006, p. 202). Its machinery of state was visible and effective outside of urban centres. How did this fact affect the violence? A third set of arguments relate to the state's *authority*. The state can lend its symbolic authority to legitimize its actions. It enjoys the Weberian monopoly on the legitimate use of violence in the enforcement of its order. It is the authority of the state that distinguishes criminal from justified use of force.

At the individual-level, the state authority-oriented argument neatly dovetails with obedience-centred explanations. In countries where the state's authority is strong, it is tempting to infer a 'culture of obedience'. This argument has been put forward to explain participation in Rwanda's genocide and in the Holocaust.[32] Ordinary Rwandans killed because the authorities told them to do so. In reality it is difficult to know if the absence of overt civil disobedience indicates a reverence for authority or instead a recognition of the state's capacity to punish dissent: obedience or compliance? Alternatively, perhaps we assume obedience because we do not 'see' dissent even though it is present. Resistance can be covert and subtle. The 'weapons of the weak' are rarely public and confrontational (Scott, 1985). But did Rwandans robotically obey orders to kill or was their action the result of a strategic calculation of what was in their self-interest to do?

The importance of individual agency is more common in explanations that focus on the role of *elites*. The image of the obedient masses also neatly dovetails with the image of a manipulative leadership. The malleability of ordinary citizens is matched by the ability of elites to exploit and mobilize them. This instrumentalist paradigm is popular in accounts of Rwanda. It was a small group of individuals in positions of power and influence who organized and are thus responsible for the genocide in Rwanda. Many of them occupied positions of authority within the state apparatus. The notion that genocide is the product of elite calculation and logic has considerable support among scholars wedded to rationalist explanations of conflict. Ruling elites choose genocide to attain strategic military and political objectives (Figueiredo & Weingast, 1999; B. A. Valentino, 2004) or because it the most 'convenient' solution to a problematic population (Chirot, 2008). However, the emphasis on both the state and elites in these arguments tends to eclipse the extent – if any - to which pressure for the violence originated from below – from within Rwandan society itself. In a challenge to such top-down explanations, it has been argued that mass violence usually also has social roots and popular involvement is commonplace. Social groups of varying agenda either coalesce or compete to redistribute power within society (Gerlach, 2006). The role of ordinary individuals in initiating and sustaining the violence – pressure from below - needs more careful scrutiny in the context of Rwanda.

ix. Dispositional and Situational Explanations

According to the dispositional perspective, individuals commit extraordinary crimes because they possess extraordinary characteristics that predispose them to violence. The list of traits that distinguish such individuals is long and the root causes complex: perpetrators might be

[32] For obedience in Rwanda, see Gérard Prunier (1998, p. 248). For the Holocaust, see Staub (1989, pp. 108-111)

especially authoritarian, anti-social, sadistic, or narcissistic for example.[33] However, these explanations do not resonate as strongly in cases of *mass* violence. Could so many Rwandans for example have had 'abnormal' personalities? If we did accept there was something extraordinary about so many Rwandans, the argument almost approaches a culturalist explanation. It suggests there was something peculiar about Rwandan culture that made so many Rwandans susceptible to genocidal violence. These types of arguments are difficult to prove, especially without comparison to another culture. The hostility to the claim that only Germans could have eliminated the Jews in the Holocaust because of a particular German cultural predisposition reflects the dangers of such an argument.[34]

'Deviancy' type explanations then give way to 'ordinary men' arguments in the context of mass participation. Ordinary individuals become capable of atrocity only in extraordinary situations. The now-famous psycho-social experiments of Milgram (1963) on authority, Asch (1951) on conformity, and Zimbardo (1973) on situational roles and perceived power underpin a scholarly consensus in favour of situationalist explanations of atrocity commission. This early work has led to sophisticated models of how individuals become capable of evil (Waller, 2002). There is a 'Lucifer effect' (P. G. Zimbardo, 2007). Yet more recent research has begun to challenge the methods and conclusions of the first-generation work on the willingness of ordinary individuals to inflict harm on others. Scholars have begun to argue individual motivations are heterogenous (Hinton, 2004; Straus, 2006) and that that there are important distinctions between participants, bystanders, and rescuers that require explanation (Baum, 2008). But what evidence do we have of the distribution of the different motivations within society? Do these motives change over time? If so, what causes them to change?

x. Bystander, Inaction, and Impunity Effects

At the individual-level 'bystanders' can exert a very powerful influence over perpetrators. Their inaction can legitimize the actions of perpetrators it has been argued (Staub, 1989, pp. 86-88). This is most apparent in group situations. Passivity is seen as acquiescence and it contributes to group 'norming'. Those who pursue violence – even if they are in a minority - feel they enjoy the support of the majority that looks on. Their faith in their chosen course of action is affirmed. Bystanders might well be unaware of the effect of their silence and the power of their dissent. What were the many Rwandans who did not participate in the genocide thinking and feeling at the

[33] On authoritarian personalities and perpetrators, see Suedfeld and Schaller in Newman and Erber (2002). On anti-social personalities, see Staub (1989, pp. 70-73). On sadism and narcissism, see Baumeister and Campbell (1999).
[34] Goldhagen (1997) had advanced this culturalist argument.

time? Did they approve? Were they indifferent? Or did they object but were afraid to voice their objections? The role of the non-participants in the violence deserves a closer look in Rwanda's genocide. This micro-level mechanism has an equivalent at the meso and macro-levels. The Catholic Church, the civil society actor best-placed to counterbalance the power of the state in Rwanda, was at best equivocal in its condemnation of anti-Tutsi violence before and during the genocide (T. P. Longman, 2010). Similarly, it has been argued that the absence of protest or opposition from other governments emboldened the extremist government. The absence of external constraint meant it felt it could act with impunity. According to this view, the failure of the international community to recognize a genocide in Rwanda, to condemn the actions of the extremists, and to intervene were encouragements to them. The moderates found themselves without outside support to strengthen their position (Des Forges, 1999, p. 2).

xi. External and International Factors

In contrast with the many theories that focus on the domestic determinants of genocide, these explanations highlight forces that operate beyond the confines of state boundaries. Midlarsky (2005) argues genocide is the product of realpolitik between states and stresses state insecurity created by territorial loss. The RPF, which invaded Rwanda with Ugandan support, eventually made territorial gains that threatened the state controlled by a Hutu elite. More broadly, the role of foreign sponsorship is often highlighted in cases of internal war where an external sponsor provides diplomatic and material support which, if given to challengers, alters the balance-of-power and intensifies the threat to incumbents. The Habyarimana regime clearly felt it had been attacked by Museveni's Uganda (J. K. Gasana, 2002). A similar logic is used to explain the role of diasporas. Their support, often financial, provides the means for challengers to initiate and sustain rebellions (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). The RPF owed its capability to wage a war to the efforts to mobilize the Rwandan refugee population by its predecessor organization, the Rwandese Alliance for National Unity. Insofar as war and genocide are causally related, external actors such as states and diasporas may have contributory roles.

A second set of arguments points to the extra-territorial impact of domestic politics in neighbouring states. Bhavnani and Lavery (2011) argue transnational ethnic ties mean threats to ethnic kin abroad may affect perceptions of threats at home. The assassination of Burundi's first elected Hutu president by Tutsi soldiers profoundly impacted the trust in Rwanda towards the RPF. Similarly, the unwelcoming politics facing Banyarwanda communities in Uganda and Zaire shaped the decision to seek armed return to Rwanda (Mamdani, 2001, pp. 159-185). Lastly, as mentioned in relation to bystanders, international inaction – the failure to condemn and stop

atrocities – may embolden extremists to continue coercion. However, it has also been argued that international action can even increase the risk of genocide. Mediators facilitating the Arusha negotiations underestimated the extent to which Hutu hardliners were willing to go to protect their position and pushed too hard for an agreement hardliners within the government could not accept (A.J. Kuperman, 1996).

The Argument Sketched

To answer the two central questions posed in the book - how and why the genocide occurred and how and why ordinary Rwandans came to participate in the ensuing violence – I consider the many theories in circulation against the evidence I collected and present an argument that first identifies the conditions that increased the risk of genocidal violence in Rwanda and then traces the steps in the causal process that ultimately culminated in it. My ontological approach to causal explanation then explicitly recognizes that phenomena such as genocide are the product of complex sequences of events and of strategic interactions between actors that unfold over time.

My argument begins then by recognizing several socio-demographic and historical peculiarities that set this otherwise little-known country apart from others in Africa. These unusual features did not mean genocide was inevitable in Rwanda. But they did portend that societal division and political contestation would be more likely to occur along ethnic rather than non-ethnic lines in this tiny African state.

To start, Rwanda's ethnic structure was distinctive. It comprised only three groups, unusual in a continent with the world's highest levels of ethnic diversity, of which one, the Hutu, constituted an overwhelming numerical majority. No state on the continent had an ethnic imbalance as large as that in Rwanda. The asymmetry would lend credence to the claim that Tutsi minority rule was particularly unjust. The relationship between these three groups was also distinctive. They were not tribes or even clearly 'ethnic' groups in the popular or conventional sense. They did *not* inhabit separate regions, they did *not* possess distinct cultures, and they did *not* have different political systems. Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa had instead been ruled together as one people, the Banyarwanda, since the late precolonial era. Moreover, their relationship was *ranked.* Tutsi came to signify higher and Hutu lower status. Mobility had once been possible within the social hierarchy. Despite all these particularities, Belgian colonial policy unfortunately failed to recognize the unusual structure, nature, and relationship between Rwanda's 'ethnic' groups. It instead reified the differences and reinforced the ranking between them by favouring Tutsi in the allocation of state offices and by recording ethnicity on compulsory registration cards. The

institutionalization of ethnicity and of its ranked structure would represent a structural vulnerability for Rwanda.

Rwanda also experienced an idiosyncratic trajectory to independence. Its social revolution, which abolished the Tutsi monarchy and ushered in an independent Hutu-controlled republic, was, along with the Afro-Shirazi revolution in Zanzibar, an exceptional event in the history of African decolonization. It was also a critical juncture in Rwanda's political history. By reversing the Tutsi political monopoly Belgium had established and creating instead a Hutu ethnocracy, it challenged the ethnic ranking of Tutsi ascendance and Hutu subordination. It also gave rise to an ideology which framed the revolution as the moment of Hutu emancipation and equated democracy with Hutu majority rule. The revolution powerfully reinforced the Hutu-Tutsi boundary. It also triggered an exodus of several hundred thousand Tutsi out of Rwanda. The refugees would always look to return. In short, Rwanda represented a highly unusual baseline. A distinctive ethnic demography, a history of institutionalized ethnic favouritism, and a revolutionary shift in an ethnically-ranked order were among the features that distinguished this small central African country. These unusual characteristics magnified the risk that political contestation would follow ethnic rather than non-ethnic boundaries in Rwanda.

This risk was realized in 1994 by the conjunction, against this unusual baseline, of two macro-political events: a civil war and political liberalization. Their coincidence was historical accident. The rebel invasion happened to occur with the democratic wave that swept across Africa following the end of the Cold War. Their origins, however, were causally distinct. Together they constituted an acute threat: an external military threat and an internal political threat. They induced both mass and elite insecurity. At the outset, however, the war radicalized some, but not many ordinary Rwandans. In contrast, among the ruling elite, the dual threat instilled an acute sense of vulnerability. It portended the redistribution or complete loss of political power.

Liberalization represented not only a threat to the incumbent political class. It presented also an opportunity for their challengers. Its most immediate impact was to pluralize Rwanda's political landscape. Importantly, moderate, not extremist ideologies dominated initially. The political competition created by liberalization divided the country primarily along partisan, not ethnic lines. In fact, several of the new opposition parties enjoyed cross-ethnic support at the outset. However, as the war progressed, this changed. It was not simply that the war radicalized Rwanda's politics. Liberalization also drove the war. The two processes interacted. Most fatefully, liberalization resulted in a serious design flaw in the peace process. It produced a multi-party coalition government *before* the conclusion of a peace agreement and power-sharing settlement. The opposition parties participated in the negotiations as part of the Rwandan government

delegation. Yet their interests were more aligned with the rebels than with the ruling party. The terms ultimately agreed then conceded too much military and political advantage to the enemy in the view of regime hardliners. The result was the escalation of elite contestation and the rise of ethnic extremism.

This contestation was complex. It took place both between and within actors. The contestation created by the *war* was between the rebel RPF, composed primarily of Tutsi exiles who attacked from Uganda, and the Government of Rwanda, dominated in the initial phase of the war by a northern Hutu elite. This military contestation interacted with and escalated the political contestation created by liberalization. Initially, this political contestation was between conservatives and reformers. Within the ruling party, it took place between loyalists and reformers: individuals committed and opposed to the president. It also took place between the ruling party and the main opposition parties: individuals who sought to preserve or to change the distribution of political power. However, as the war escalated, the contestation between conservatives and reformers evolved into contestation between moderates and hardliners: individuals open or opposed to using force to avoid power-sharing across ethnic lines. Each escalatory action committed by the rebels bolstered the credibility of hawks and undermined the influence of doves within the ruling and opposition parties. In turn, escalatory actions committed by hardliners in these parties strengthened the determination of the RPF to resolve the external contestation on the battlefield. In short, the contestation created by the war and the contestation created by liberalization strategically interacted and drove each other in a mutually-reinforcing cycle.

Escalation and extremism, however, were not inevitable in Rwanda. I argue it was the weakness of domestic and international constraints on the actions taken by each side that enabled the threat to intensify and ethnic extremism to rise. At the domestic level, key state institutions and civil society actors failed to respond to extremist rhetoric and violence. Extremists acted with impunity. At the international level, the absence of an intervention force capable of enforcing peace preserved the military threat, and external pressure for democratic reform and to participate in power-sharing talks reinforced the political threat. As these dual threats escalated, so too did the inter-elite contestation.

This contestation intensified in the space of opportunity created by Habyarimana's death. His assassination, which was of by far the longest-serving head of state in sub-Saharan Africa to be killed in office, created an unprecedented political opportunity. In theoretical terms, it marked a sudden rupture in the political opportunity structure. No other country in sub-Saharan Africa had experienced this 'perfect storm' of a civil war, political liberalization, and assassination of head of state. They represented the coincidence of a security threat with a political opportunity. In the

power vacuum and uncertainty that ensued, hardliners within the regime manoeuvred for control of the state. Regime moderates responded and were initially successful in rebuffing extremist efforts to seize power. Simultaneously, the civil war resumed as the Presidential Guard engaged the RPF in Kigali, and extremist violence commenced, targeting Tutsi civilians and Hutu political moderates. Both the rebels, whose high command was not divided in how to respond to Habyarimana's death, and the regime's extremists refused to de-escalate.

Yet, I argue, genocide was still not the inevitable outcome of this intensified contestation. The regime's extremists were not destined to prevail over moderates and to capture the state. The power struggle could have resolved in either side's favour. Contestation escalated in favour of violence and extremists, however, because the domestic and international constraints on escalatory actions were, again, weak in Rwanda. At the domestic level, Rwanda's state institutions not only failed to stop the extremist violence targeting civilians, they failed to mediate the conflict over the president's succession and the continuation of government. Extremists argued the 1991 constitution while moderates claimed the 1993 Arusha peace agreement governed the succession. In contrast, it was clear that there was no legal basis to install a new cabinet. Nonetheless, Rwanda's Constitutional Court, the legally-mandated institution, was not called upon to resolve either issue. It was viewed as partisan, not independent. Its president, who would be among the first to be assassinated on April 7th 1994, had publicly declared his support for an opposition party. At the international level, the erroneous characterization of the violence as only a civil war rather than also as a genocide, and belated attribution of responsibility to the extremists, along with the decision not to reinforce but to draw down the UN peacekeeping force, played out in favour of those committed to war and violence on both sides. International inaction emboldened extremists and reinforced their sense of impunity.

In the face of weak domestic and international constraints, I argue the contestation simply resolved according to the relative material capabilities of the parties. At the domestic level, inside the regime, there was no clear advantage in terms of relative *coordination* power. Extremists and moderates both controlled important positions in the civilian and military apparatus of state. Extremists, however, had a clearer advantage in terms of *coercive* power. They had at their command superior military forces in Kigali. This enabled them ultimately to prevail at the national level and to capture the civilian and military apparatus of state. They installed their candidate for president, their candidates for an interim government, and, eventually, their candidate for army chief-of-staff. At the international level, as we now know, between the government and rebels, the RPF ultimately proved to be stronger on the battlefield.

The political opportunity created by the president's assassination also triggered contestation at the local level. Capture of the state locally was crucial for the mobilization of the population and the implementation of the killing. Importantly, these power struggles did not *follow* extremist capture of the centre. They happened concurrently with the contestation at the national level. Across Rwanda's eleven prefectures and 145 communes, some prefects and burgomasters, in particular party loyalists who subscribed to the hardliner position on the war or who had strong personal or kinship ties to hardliners at the centre, took the initiative themselves to use their official power to immediately target their Tutsi populations. In some of these localities, the violence began even *before* the fall of the centre. Violence then did not simply radiate from centre-to-periphery or from top-to-bottom. It moved in both directions.

Other state officials at the local level, particularly those who belonged to opposition parties or who were otherwise not part of the informal network of personal ties linking the centre and periphery, were uncertain what to do or else refused to target Tutsi. However, once extremists captured the centre, officials able to face down local challenges initially were quickly neutralized. The centre had considerably more powerful resources at its disposal to co-opt, coerce, or cast out the recalcitrant. It is why extremism ultimately prevailed everywhere in Rwanda once the centre fell. In addition to pressures from the centre, some local officials also faced challengers – both extremists and opportunists - from within their own communities who sought to replace them. These ethnic and political entrepreneurs were not all tied to the state. Some were private citizens. There was resistance then to violence from *within* the state apparatus and also pressure for violence from *outside* of it.

These differences in extremist control at the local level resulted in variation in how quickly violence broke out across Rwanda's communes. Violence was delayed where it took time for local power struggles to resolve. However, it was not only elite resistance from above that mattered. Resistance from below in communities with strong interethnic ties also slowed down the genocide's onset. In some localities Hutu and Tutsi residents collaborated to prevent violence from entering their communities. It took time to break these social bonds and to divide cohesive communities. This resistance never prevented violence altogether. It merely delayed it. Communities that resisted found themselves subject to extra-local pressures. Individuals and groups from neighbouring communes infiltrated and helped divide and mobilize those communities that wavered. Contagion effects were strong in a small, densely-populated country.

Extremists, once in control of the state at either the national or local levels, used the state's considerable power to implement the genocide. This power did not comprise simply the Rwandan state's unusually strong material capabilities to coerce its citizens and to coordinate across its

agents. Its power also derived from its unusually high symbolic authority for a postcolonial African state. This authority legitimized, for some Rwandans, the directives of state officials and, consequently, also the violence when framed as national defence. The Rwandan state's low autonomy vis-à-vis society was also important. Low autonomy enabled the capture of the state by private social and political forces. The ruling party had penetrated the state down to the lowest administrative level in Rwanda. Its machinery, even more so than that of the state apparatus, was remarkable. Party extremists instrumentalized the state which became a weapon of mass destruction *par excellence* vis-à-vis society. Together, these three distinct dimensions of the state's power – its capacity, legitimacy, and autonomy – were each consequential for the genocide and each would matter for mobilizing Rwandans.

Popular mobilization followed state capture. In communities across Rwanda local political and ethnic entrepreneurs – opportunists and racists – emerged and drew on their social networks to establish small groups of supporters to mobilize the wider population. Importantly, these mobilizing agents were not all state office-holders. They were also not all local elites. Many were unconnected to the state and a large number were also ordinary farmers. Pressure for violence existed below within Rwandan *society* too. Once these 'critical masses' had been formed, they jump-started the violence through ingroup policing. Residents were threatened with and suffered social, financial, and physical sanctions if they did not join the attack groups. Not everyone participated in the killing. A majority in fact did not. This was, in part, due to differences in individual disposition toward the violence. Contrary to the consensus, killers were not all 'ordinary'. They were also not all 'coerced' into killing. There was heterogeneity among perpetrators and a multiplicity of motivations. Mobilization was in fact a continuum. I found 'extremists' – often minorities in their communities – moved first, followed by 'opportunists', and lastly 'conformists', typically the largest group. There were also pacifists who resisted participation.

Dispositional differences alone, however, do not explain why some participated and others not. Selection into the violence was also mediated by micro-situational opportunities and relational ties. Settlement patterns and social networks were consequential. Where you lived and who you knew also mattered for whether you would join in the killing. Counter-intuitively, it was not social isolates but rather the most socially-connected individuals in communities who were the ones most likely to be drawn into the violence. Social capital had a dark side. Once engaged in violence, individual motivations also changed. Radicalization occurred through the act of killing. Well-known psycho-social mechanisms – desensitization, habituation, and dehumanization – explain how the reluctant could become the zealous. It is also how the coerced could become the cruel.

The shocking pain and suffering inflicted gratuitously on some victims, including the sexual torture of women, was also the product of repeated killing and continuing impunity.

Such macabre behaviour is in fact not unusual in cases of ethnic violence and mass killings. However, the violence and mobilization that occurred in Rwanda were unusual in another way. They were extraordinary in their scale, speed, and scope. One in five Hutu men participated in killing nearly two-thirds of Rwanda's Tutsi population in just over 100 days and in almost every community across Rwanda. The reasons for this, I argue, may be traced to Rwanda's highly unusual socio-demography and geography. Rwanda comprised a small territory with a highly agrarian society, an exceptionally high population density, and an unusual pattern of spatially-integrated ethnic settlement. This meant the distances between communities were small, magnifying contagion effects; the social ties among individuals were dense and multiplex, amplifying the social forces of coercion and co-optation; and anonymity and privacy were low, making it difficult for neighbours to escape detection.

In sum, I argue security (civil war and democratization), opportunity (democratization and assassination), and authority (the state) – the three themes of the book's title - each mattered. To borrow a popular idiom from criminal law, they represent the means (a powerful and privatized state), the motive (a war-time and liberalization threat), and the opportunity (multipartyism and the president's assassination) for genocide.

Research Design: The Evidence and Methods

Genocide is an empirically complex phenomenon. No single study can account for all aspects of its violence. It is also a highly politicized and deeply emotional subject. On certain issues, the findings may always be disputed and some people may never be persuaded. Researchers may find they themselves, rather than their research, are the object of scrutiny and criticism. Accusations of revisionism, minimalism, and denialism are among the risks genocide scholars, including those working on Rwanda, face. Given this, I take the time to explain, in more detail than is customary, the methodological choices made and the evidentiary base relied on in this book to help readers decide how much credibility my findings merit. Transparency will not protect researchers from personal criticisms intended to discredit their character and motivation. However, it may help demonstrate whether their conclusions have a scientifically-defensible basis or not.

i. The Research Design

I made a number of deliberate choices in the book's approach to explaining the genocide and individual participation in it. First, I emphasize mechanisms. The particular structural vulnerabilities and exceptional conjunction of events that gave rise to genocide in Rwanda are unlikely to exist or arise in exactly the same manner in other places. However, I believe some of the underlying mechanisms at work are observable elsewhere. Persistent definitional debates over what constitutes genocide makes grand theorization on genocide and direct comparisons difficult. The mechanisms-focused approach allows more contingent comparisons to be made to other cases.

Second, as already noted, I examine the genocide at several levels of analysis. I synthesize processes and events at the macro, meso, and micro-levels in an attempt to identify the forces at work across them and to understand how agenda and actions at the international, national, and local levels interacted. Third, the approach is explicitly interdisciplinary. I draw on theoretical insights primarily from political science on the nature of the state and state-society relations, civil wars and counter-insurgencies, political communication and framing, and democratic transitions; but also from sociology on social movement mobilization, social networks and recruitment, and collective action and critical masses; and lastly social psychology looking at, *inter alia*, obedience and conformity, intergroup contact and relations, and social identity theories.

Third, the approach relies heavily on comparisons. While this is a study of one genocide in one country, it makes a number of cross-national and sub-national comparisons. It points to Rwanda's exceptionalism by ranking it against other sub-Saharan countries on a range of dimensions relating primarily to its demography and geography. It also compares how the genocide unfolded at multiple levels of Rwanda's territorial administration. Rwanda comprised eleven prefectures, 145 communes, 1545 sectors, and about 9000 cells in 1994. The book makes structured comparisons between two prefectures, Ruhengeri and Butare, to capture a historically and politically important North-South divide in the country; two communes, Mukingo and Taba, chosen because the genocide began early and late in them respectively; and four cells, selected because two (Tamba and Mutovu) experienced high levels and two (Ruginga and Mwendo) low levels of violence during the genocide. The book also systematically compares individuals who mobilized during the genocide against those who did not. Most studies of perpetrators – primarily from the Holocaust and Rwanda – neglect to study those who did *not* commit violence. Yet studying non-perpetrators is important for understanding how 'ordinary' the killers really were and for helping to explain why some persons participated but others not. Lastly, it makes an inter-temporal comparison looking at life before and during the genocide in order to trace the evolution of events that led up to the genocide in these communities. An important question that still needs

to be answered is to what extent the violence marked an unexpected rupture in inter-ethnic relations. Were communities widely-radicalized before the violence began?

ii. The Evidence

The project collected a diverse set of data types to test its hypotheses. Ultimately the argument presented in this book was constructed from thirteen main sources of information. First, I conducted a survey of 294 Rwandans. The survey questionnaire comprised 223 questions relating to their attitudes, opinions, memories, and beliefs.[35] It also collected information on their demographic and socio-economic characteristics. The sample was stratified two ways. It was divided between perpetrators (104 individuals) and non-perpetrators (190 individuals). This latter group included a small number of genocide survivors (thirty-four individuals).[36] A perpetrator was defined as any individual who joined an attack group that killed at least one individual. The perpetrator then need not have struck a physical blow himself.[37] It was also stratified by region, Ruhengeri prefecture in the north, and Butare prefecture in the south. The sample was designed to be statistically representative of each region.

Second, I talked to forty-two Rwandans in more detailed, open-ended interviews about life before and during the genocide in their communities. Twenty-one I interviewed in depth and on several occasions using a semi-structured interview questionnaire, and twenty-one, who were a subset of the 294 survey respondents, I interviewed in less detail, asking more targeted questions. All forty-two were individuals resident in the four chosen cells at the time of the genocide. Where possible, in each community I talked with survivors, perpetrators, bystanders, figures of state and social authority, and older residents with historical knowledge of the community. The goal was to interview a cross-section of these communities.

Third, I asked literate Rwandan prison inmates – who had been accused of genocide-related crimes - to write histories of the genocide in their communities from their own perspectives. The goal was not to obtain a reliable record of events – which would have been highly unlikely - but to gain an insight into how and what these individuals were thinking beyond what they might choose to reveal in an oral interview.

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[35] 160 of these questions were pre-coded. The remaining sixty-three were open-ended.

[36] In Rwanda the term 'survivor' refers not only to Tutsi but also to the Hutu wives of Tutsi men who were sometimes also targeted. From among the thirty-four 'survivors', twenty-one were Tutsi, and thirteen were Hutu women formerly married to Tutsi men.

[37] It became apparent that in attack groups that encountered small numbers of Tutsi, only a few individuals were required to carry out the actual act of killing.

Turning to the quantitative data presented in the book, I relied on several datasets drawing either on data I had collected myself or on information in other existing datasets. First, I assembled data profiling Rwanda's 145 administrative communes to test hypotheses on why violence began early in some places, but later in others. I drew on several sources but relied primarily on Rwanda's 1991 population census - the last time information on ethnicity was collected in Rwanda. Its credibility on this issue has been questioned, but the raw micro-data, which had until recently been missing, have re-appeared and allow the census to be more deeply-probed for reliability.

Second, I undertook a census of the population of one administrative sector – about 3400 individuals - as it existed in 1994, collected data on the spatial location of all 647 households, and mapped the social networks of 116 residents to help explain differential selection into the violence. Third, I analysed the content of broadcasts from *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines* (RTLM) - infamously known as Radio Machete - from before and during the genocide. I obtained transcripts for fifty-five of the 360 days that RTLM was on the air. The broadcasts provide a fascinating insight into the evolution of extremist thinking over time, and into the issues to which radio listeners were exposed during this period.

Fourth, I compiled demographic data on 160 individuals identified in a survey as organizers and leaders during the genocide in two prefectures to construct profiles of local mobilizing agents. Fifth, I collected data on the assassinations of African heads of state and on the contexts in which they were killed to situate the significance of Habyarimana's assassination. Lastly, I drew directly from several datasets compiled by others to compare Rwanda with other countries. As I argue, Rwanda was an exceptional country in Africa – an extraordinary baseline for genocide - and these data provide the support for this claim. Too numerous to list here, I acknowledge them in the text when I draw on them.

In terms of other sources of information, I also drew on data from *gacaca*, a traditional institution adapted by the Rwandan government to establish truth, justice, and reconciliation in local communities in the aftermath of the genocide. It was conceived primarily to expedite the processing of the large number of suspected perpetrators by assigning local communities this responsibility. While reliance on *gacaca* data requires caution for a number of reasons, the *gacaca* produced enormous amounts of important information concerning the genocide at the local level. In particular, communities collectively compiled lists of the accused, categorized by the type of crime they had committed, as well as lists of the victims. I also relied on evidence from the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, Tanzania. Its public records database contains a wealth of information concerning individuals and events during the genocide. Witness testimony is weighed and evaluated against a high standard of proof before a 'fact' is established.

Lastly, I also drew extensively on several archival sources. I am particularly indebted to those researchers who compiled databases of: (i) Rwandan presidential speeches from 1962-94, whose content I analysed for the evolution in ideological messaging in Rwanda; (ii) declassified UN Security Council documents, including cables from UNAMIR to the UN Secretariat, for the period leading up to and during the genocide, which informed my analysis of what was known and what more could have been done to minimize the killing; and (iii) the minutes of closed meetings held and public statements issued by Rwanda's Military Crisis Committee (MCC) and then its Interim Government (IG) during the genocide. These documents were invaluable for my analysis of how extremists outmanoeuvred moderates to capture the state and implement the genocide.

iii. A Critical Note on the Methods Used in the Project

As with the evidence, the level of transparency in the methods and approach followed should be high enough to allow readers to evaluate their suitability given the deeply-contested nature of research on the genocide. Methodological choices often involve trade-offs and taking the time to explain the risks, and the steps taken to mitigate these risks, is particularly valuable in such contexts.

First, the time at which the research was conducted mattered. The evidence I draw on in this book was collected over the course of three main field trips: first between November 2002 and August 2003; second in summer 2009; and lastly in spring 2017. I was asking Rwandans questions about events that took place first nine years, then fifteen years, and eventually twenty-three years previously. There was a very strong likelihood that individuals would have constructed narratives of events subsequently, as well of course as the possibility of memory loss.

Second, also related to the timing of the research, the social and political climate in Rwanda almost certainly influenced some individuals' responses. Rwanda's post-genocide government was composed heavily of the rebel group that had won the war ending the genocide. It was widely-seen as pro-Tutsi and authoritarian within Hutu circles. Moreover, its policy of national reconciliation made discussion of ethnicity taboo. I anticipated self-censorship or else socially and politically favourable answers on certain issues.

Third, working with perpetrators of violence presented particular problems. In the Rwandan context it was already a challenge to identify a perpetrator reliably. Many individuals had not confessed to their crimes, even though some had been in prison for nearly fifteen years when I spoke with them. Some were still at large in their communities. Those who had confessed had an incentive to minimize their personal responsibility, especially as the *gacaca* local courts were in effect when I interviewed them. There were clearly risks in relying on perpetrator testimony.

Moreover, there is evidently an ethical dimension to working with perpetrators of violence. One of the greatest risks lies in re-traumatizing individuals when asking them to remember horrific events. It needed to be done with care and sensitivity.

Fourth, there was the risk of using intermediaries when conducting interviews. Unless my interviewees spoke French, I had to rely on the aid of a Kinyarwandaphone interpreter. His identity might well influence responses. In addition, there is bound to have been some loss of the linguistic and cultural nuances in translation. Similarly, all the respondents who were surveyed outside of the prison (190 individuals) were interviewed by enumerators I had hired and trained. Their identity might also have shaped responses.

I tried to devise solutions to all of these challenges. None was a panacea. I attempted then to mitigate self-serving bias and self-censorship, which were at the heart of the first three problems mentioned above, through three techniques. First, I used triangulation. I verified 'facts' by comparing Tutsi survivor testimony against Hutu perpetrator and non-perpetrator statements. As will be evident in the following chapters, I always report answers from both groups. Second, I gave more credibility to 'statements-against-interest'. A Hutu who told me that he holds the current government responsible for the genocide was likely to be sincere in his belief. He faced a strong disincentive to make this view public. Third, I sometimes asked the same question but made a grammatical switch from the second to third person. Instead of asking an individual 'What did you do?' or 'What did you think?', I would ask 'What did others do?' or 'What did others think?' While far from foolproof, each of these techniques went some way to helping me establish with some more reliability what happened in Rwanda.

Gacaca made differentiating between perpetrators and non-perpetrators somewhat easier. Each community participating in *gacaca* was required to compile a list of the accused, and ultimately to categorize individuals by the crimes they had committed in their communities. However, the lists were not infallible. It was not unknown for false accusations to be made. To minimize this risk, I verified the names against a second list of the accused established by a lesser-known and informal *gacaca* process involving self-confessed perpetrators within the prison system. Only if a name appeared on *both* lists was it included for selection in the perpetrator stratum of the survey. Conversely, non-perpetrators were identified by checking that his/her name did not appear on *either* list.

Intermediary effects were unavoidable given my limited Kinyarwanda. Moreover, my research assistant, Moses, was Tutsi. It quickly became apparent it was not possible to keep this fact from interviewees. However, to my surprise, when in the prisons talking to Hutu perpetrators, his ethnicity proved to be less of an obstacle to trust than I initially feared. To be clear, trust was

not immediate and it was not universal. However, after my first few interviews word quickly circulated within the prison that there was a 'mazungu' ('white' foreigner) doing research who wanted to understand the genocide from their perspective. We spent several weeks in each prison we visited and at the end of our time in one of them, I was surprised when Moses brought a gift of a portable radio to some of the inmates. The ethnic distance I had worried about was not reflected in the relationship my interpreter had established with the prisoners. In the case of the non-perpetrator survey outside of the prison, I hired enumerators who were Hutu and who were already known in the communities in which they operated. I found this prior acquaintance with the community made a big difference. People naturally found it difficult to trust outsiders. Many of those I ultimately chose were the local primary school teacher trainers. They were well educated and understood the sensitivity of the research, and they were well-respected in the communities. I also verified that they themselves had not been implicated in the genocide.

Lastly, I do not have a simple answer to the ethical dilemma posed by interviewing perpetrators and survivors of genocide. It is a difficult balance to strike between the desire to understand and explain the genocide, and the welfare and privacy of the individuals affected by it. In the chapters that follow, while the names of places are real, the names of most of my respondents have been altered to protect their privacy. However, I did keep the true names of respondents who held public office in Rwanda, as well as the true names of well-known perpetrators. Many of my respondents talked willingly and openly. Others spoke without remorse, and even without emotion. Nonetheless, there were still a few who had difficulty. Informed consent procedures, though used here, did not prevent two individuals with whom I spoke from becoming visibly distraught as they told me their stories. I ended these interviews quickly, and did not re-visit these people. Ultimately, tact, sensitivity, and a respect for the limits of the person are the best advice I can give to others contemplating similar research.

Organization of the Book

Chapter two contextualizes Rwanda for the reader and sets the baseline for the genocide. It shows Rwanda was a highly unusual country in sub-Saharan Africa by highlighting a set of societal, demographic, and geographic characteristics that set it apart from others on the continent. It explains how – in ways that are sometimes surprising - Rwanda's exceptional population density, spatial settlement pattern, limited urbanization/highly agrarian society, low ecological variability, small territory, cultural homogeneity, ranked ethnic structure, and numerical ethnic imbalance would each amplify the forces that led to the genocide. The extraordinary scale, speed and scope

of the violence and mobilization in Rwanda can also be traced to these extraordinary baseline characteristics.

Chapter three then turns to the first of the three conjunctural factors: Rwanda's civil war or 'security'. The chapter focuses its lens on the psycho-social impact of the war on ordinary Rwandans and identifies the mechanisms linking the security threat to civilian radicalization. The chapter makes clear, however, a war-time security threat alone does not explain the genocide. The opportunity for extremism to emerge from the periphery was also needed and this is the subject of chapters four and five. Chapter four examines the opportunity created by Rwanda's political liberalization, the second conjunctural factor. It analyses the impact of multipartyism at the national and local levels and shows it initially had an ethnically integrative effect as new parties built cross-ethnic support bases. However, it also shows how liberalization and the war interacted to gradually radicalize Rwandan politics. The internal contestation between moderates and hardliners that evolved within Rwanda drove the external contestation between the government and the RPF. It was through these strategic interactions within and between actors that the war escalated and extremism gained ground.

Chapter five considers the impact of the third and final conjunctural factor: the assassination of Rwanda's president – another 'opportunity'. It examines how the unexpected death of Habyarimana created a power vacuum and triggered intense power struggles between moderates and hardliners for control of the state at both the national and local levels. These struggles resolved in favour of extremists because external constraints were weak and because extremists controlled superior coercive forces that allowed them to capture the centre. Chapter six then examines the role of Rwanda's state or 'authority'. The state was the means through which the genocide was implemented. The chapter traces the historical origins of the Rwandan state's strong capabilities, low autonomy, and high legitimacy and explains how each of the three dimensions mattered for the state's power over its citizens. Chapter seven then turns to the question of why and how ordinary Rwandans came to kill. It focuses on the puzzle of why certain individuals were drawn into the violence but others not. It shows differential selection into the violence was a function of dispositional, situational, and relational factors. The chapter also explains the micro-mechanics of Rwanda's massive civilian mobilization. Finally, chapter eight concludes with a stocktaking. It considers what has been cumulatively learned about Rwanda's genocide over the last twenty-five years and explores the implications of the book's findings for theories of genocide more generally.